

Morgantown Tree Board (MTB)
Minutes, meeting of October 24, 2016

Present: MTB members Dan Brown, Phil Crim, Greg Dahle, Ken Hacker (MUB), Matt Walker, Secretary Jon Weems, and Chair Dave Barnett, City Council Liaison Nancy Ganz, City employee Marchetta Maupin, BOPARC Executive Director Melissa Burch, and BOPARC Associate Director Roger Moss.

Excused: Jonathan Cumming, David Davis

Chair D. Barnett called the meeting to order at 4:34 PM in City Council chambers and noted a quorum was present.

G. Dahle moved, and J. Weems seconded, that August meeting minutes prepared by D. Barnett be approved as drafted. The motion passed unanimously.

Report from M. Maupin. M. Maupin expressed concern about two large sycamores on Ashland Ave. near Hillcrest. These trees, full of vines, are very near houses and streets. The Parking Authority was considering removal of Bradford pears near the Spruce St. parking garage and wanted MTB's advice. It was agreed the pears had outgrown the space available and might be removed. CVS and other High Street merchants had requested pruning of branches that were contacting buildings or interfering with security camera sight lines. Contract arborist Dave Mitchell had completed pruning elsewhere, with help from M. Maupin's crew. D. Mitchell had also recommended removal of five of the cherry trees along the rail-trail downtown. D. Mitchell was at least the second ISA (International Society of Arboriculture)-certified arborist to recommend removal of these trees, which are a memorial for Milan Roh's late wife. Highland Ave. trees previously considered by MTB were being removed. G. Dahle's WVU class was scheduled to plant trees (with M. Maupin, D. Barnett, and D. Brown) at the Public Safety building. A homeowner had requested removal of a balsam poplar on City property near Burroughs Run. The removal was referred to Engineering.

Unfinished Business

1. Deckers Creek Trees at Marilla Park/ WV Radio Corporation. D. Barnett reported a discussion with Holly Purpura of Friends of Deckers Creek (FODC) about the denial of a grant application for streambank planting. D. Barnett said he would speak with Interim City Manager Glen Kelly about a possible reimbursement or donation from West Virginia Radio Corporation to pay for plants. Discussion ensued, with general agreement that early spring planting with matting to slow erosion would be best.
2. Demonstration City Grant Application. The status of the application for four trees on Pleasant St. was uncertain. It was noted that Bob Hannah (WV Urban Forestry Coordinator) had funds for such grants. M. Maupin reported the City was looking to hire one or more grant writers, which might help expedite future grant applications.
3. Tree Database. It was noted that the city tree survey completed by the USDA Forest Service in 2011, while still useful, was outdated and inadequate for management purposes. D. Barnett reported attending two database presentations at the recent ISA

meeting in Morgantown. Both systems were cloud-based. One from Davey was complicated, one from another vendor was simpler. Each was expected to cost about \$2000/year, which might come from grants in some years, but perhaps not reliably in every year. D. Barnett said he would also ask Interim City Manager Glen Kelly about a commitment from the city to fund the database in years grant funding is unavailable. The USDAFS reportedly had a comparison chart to help cities decide on a tree database. D. Barnett said he would send the chart to MTB members.

4. Tree Plantings. 13 trees were scheduled to arrive at White Park on Friday, October 28 – 5 trees for the Public Safety building, 6 trees for Maple Avenue, and 2 scarlet oaks for undetermined locations. MTB volunteers were sought to help dig holes at the Public Safety building the afternoon of October 31, then G. Dahle and his students were scheduled to do most of the work of planting on November 1. The Maple Ave. planting (3 hornbeams and 3 regal prince oaks) was tentatively set for November 11. It was hoped that appropriate sites would be found to plant one scarlet oak at Wiles Hill, and one at Jack Roberts Park.

New Business

Ash Tree Removal in Parks. M. Burch reported large numbers of dead and rapidly dying ash trees in City parks. Preliminary estimates for removal from frequented areas of White Park (71 trees), Dorsey's Knob, and Marilla Park were \$16,000, \$5500, and \$4300, respectively, well beyond BOPARC's budget. BOPARC planned to seek additional estimates. M. Burch asked for help determining which removals were most urgent, but all removals appeared urgent to MTB members. M. Walker noted that Mon Power is cutting ashes up to 15 feet beyond right of way limits (with permission) because such trees pose a threat to power lines. G. Dahle, R. Moss, D. Brown, and M. Walker agreed that borer-killed ash trees were very brittle, subject to sudden failure, too dangerous to climb, and dangerous to pull away from buildings or other "targets" with winches. MTB members unanimously agreed that the presence of a great many dead ash trees constituted a crisis requiring special funding and quick action.

Open Discussion

There was brief discussion of the possibility of Mon Power reinstating its "MTRP" program to pay to plant appropriate trees under power lines after the removal of inappropriate trees.

Next meeting time and place were not set, but it was noted that MTB help would be appreciated at scheduled November tree plantings.

Motion to adjourn made at 5:59 PM by D. Brown, seconded by G. Dahle. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted, _____

Jon Weems, Secretary